

Community Project Funding Resource Guide

Office of Congresswoman Ilhan Omar

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Intro and How to Use this Guide

Congresswoman Omar is committed to bringing resources to the Fifth Congressional District and supporting organizations and government entities across our district in fulfilling your mission. Our choices regarding Community Project Funding priorities will be based on the core values of co-governance and racial equity.

This guide is based on what we learned from the FY22 and FY23 cycles and new guidance from the House Appropriations Committee for Fiscal Year 2024 Community Project Funding process. While we do not know exactly how Community Project Funding will be handled by the various committees in the future, the vast majority of the guidance in this document will be helpful in preparing a submission for this year and a future year. Our hope is that by following this guide and preparing the asked for information, your organization will be well positioned to make a strong case this year and in a future year. While certain details of this guide may change, and thus your proposals may need to be tweaked, this guide should put your organization in the best position possible to successfully attain funding in a future cycle.

Note: References in this guide to the 2023 budget may be outdated for future funding cycles.

Overview of the Community Project Funding Process

The House Appropriations Committee will be accepting Community Project Funding requests in future years. These requests will be funded through the numerous government funding bills. The Office of Representative Ilhan Omar is looking forward to recommending important local projects for federal funding and hopes this guide will assist those seeking funding.

Disclaimer: This information comes from the House Committee on Appropriations. This information may change in future budget years.

What is Community Project Funding?

Community Project Funding, an updated version of the “Congressional earmarks.” It allows Members of Congress to request funding for projects in their communities. It will bring direct funding to projects that make a real difference in the lives of constituents. Reforms in the program, as compared to the earmark process of decades’ past, will produce a small number of projects with strong community support, a transparent process where no Member’s family can benefit, and auditing to ensure money was spent as planned.

Requirements for Community Project Funding

All requests must meet the requirements laid out by the House Appropriations Committee. Organizations must meet federal eligibility and funding rules, such as matching requirements. These are the overall requirements:

- Your project **must be located in Minnesota's Fifth District**. You can check [here](#).
- Only projects with **demonstrated community support** will be considered. You will be required to submit evidence of community support, including (but not limited to):
 - Letters of support from elected community leaders
 - Press articles highlighting the need for the specific project
 - Resolutions passed by local/county/state governments
 - Projects listed on community development plans, state intended use plans, and other publicly available planning documents
 - Support from local newspaper editorial boards, etc.
- A **financial disclosure statement** from the Congresswoman certifying that neither the Congresswoman's immediate family nor the Congresswoman have any financial interest in the proposed project.

Other guidelines for Community Project Funding requests

- No funds can be used by for-profit recipients. All awardees will be non-profits, governmental, and/or tribal entities.
- Please see the [Appropriations Committee FY24 General Guidance](#) for more information

Information Required for Submission

Each House Appropriations Subcommittee requires slightly different information to be submitted before they will consider a Community Funding Project request complete. The full list of questions will be provided by the Congresswoman's staff but will typically include the following:

- Legal Name of Requesting Entity/Organization
- Point of Contact (Email and Phone Number)
- Physical Location of the Project/Program (Exact Address)
- Brief Description of Project (No more than 500 words)
- Brief Description of How the Project Will Impact the MN05 Community
- Brief Description of Community Support of Project
- Amount of Funding Requested for Project (in USD)

- Federal Agency that would administer this funding and the account –the following accounts are eligible for FY24 CPF projects. Follow the links for guidance specific to each subcommittee and account.

Fiscal Year 2024 Community Project Funding-Eligible Accounts

- [Agriculture](#)
 - Farm Production and Conservation Programs
 - Natural Resources Conservation Service (Conservation Operations)
 - Research, Education, and Economics
 - Agricultural Research Service (Buildings and Facilities)
- [Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies](#)
 - Department of Commerce
 - NIST—Scientific and Technical Research
 - NOAA—Coastal Zone Management
 - Department of Justice
 - COPS Technology and Equipment
 - Byrne Justice
 - National Aeronautics and Space Administration
 - Safety, Security, and Mission Services
- [Energy and Water Development](#)
 - Army Corps of Engineers (Civil Works)
 - Investigations
 - Construction
 - Mississippi River and Tributaries
 - Operation and Maintenance
 - Department of the Interior/Bureau of Reclamation
 - Water and Related Resources
- [Homeland Security \(FEMA\)](#)
 - FEMA – Emergency Operations Center
 - FEMA – Pre-Disaster Mitigation
- [Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies \(EPA\)](#)
 - EPA – Clean Water State Revolving Fund
 - EPA – Drinking Water State Revolving Fund
- [Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies](#)
 - Army
 - Army National Guard
 - Army Reserve
 - Navy & Marine Corps
 - Navy Reserve
 - Air Force and Space Force
 - Air National Guard
 - Air Force Reserve
 - DoD, Defense-Wide
- Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies
 - [HUD - Economic Development Initiatives \(EDI\)](#)
 - [DOT – Airport Improvement Program](#)
 - [DOT – Highway Infrastructure Projects](#)
 - [DOT – Transit Infrastructure Projects](#)
 - [DOT – Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements](#)
 - [DOT – Port Infrastructure Development Program](#)

Transparency

In the interest of transparency, all Members are required to post all Community Project Funding requests submitted to the committee on their website. The posting must include the name of the proposed recipient, the address, the amount of the request, and an explanation of the purpose and justification for the use of taxpayer funds. An example of how we posted this in 2020 is found at the end of this document in the Documents and Additional Resources section. Please contact an Omar staff person to see an example of what will be posted if your project is chosen by our office for submission.

Additional information to strengthen applications

This is a multi-phase process. Congressional offices are allowed to submit 15 projects for consideration by the Committee.

Here is how our process will work. First, our team will evaluate each submission and narrow down our list. We will then decide on our chosen projects, notify applicants, submit them to the appropriate committee, and publicly post our chosen projects on our website. Then each individual committee will decide which projects, across the country, will make it into the bill. The bill will then need to be passed in each chamber of Congress and signed by the President. Traditionally, because all members of Congress are allowed to participate in the process, once a project makes it into the bill, the likelihood of passage is strong. That said, nothing is guaranteed.

This additional information will support the case for why Congresswoman Omar should select this project for our list. The information asked for in the previous section is required by the committee. The information below will make your submission significantly stronger by bolstering your case to our office. This supplemental information will also assist the Omar Congressional Office as we persuade the Committee to support initiatives in our district.

- Eligibility of Requesting Entity/Organization
 - State, local, or tribal government
 - Publicly owned entity (i.e. port, university, PUD, etc.)
 - Non-profit with a quasi-governmental purpose (i.e. Special District)
- Name of Project/Program to be Funded
- Short Description of the Project (To appear in Subcommittee Report)
- Explanation of the Project/Program and Justification of the Use of Taxpayer Funds (No more than 1,000 words, this will be posted publicly on the Congresswoman's website)
- Detailed description of the project or program to be funded including data and/or evidence that demonstrates the public benefit
- Detailed breakdown of how the requested funds would be spent

- Total project cost (Include Federal/Non-Federal Shares): Detailed breakdown of the total cost of the project or program that includes all prior funding sources (both public and private) and any amounts that remain unfunded
 - a. Sources of funding for full share of cost if amount received is less than requested (Include whether the sources have been secured and, if so, how much)
- Total amounts of federal funds previously awarded to this project or program (Include how much and from which agency, agencies, or programs)
- Detailed timeline and anticipated completion date for the project or program
- Once completed, will the project or program require continued funding to maintain operation? If so, where will that funding come from?
- List any public or private entities that have been identified as project sponsors in prior funding requests and/or that will help determine how the requested funds will be spent.
- Will funds go to an organization that will make sub-grants of those funds to other organizations? If yes, please list the sub-grantees.
- Are there any known or anticipated community concerns associated with this project or program (e.g. conflict with land use, neighborhood concerns, etc.) that could prevent it from moving forward?
- Please list additional stakeholders in the community who support the proposed program or project and evidence of community support.
- Is another Member of Congress submitting a request for this same project?
- Has the same project request been submitted to more than one Appropriations subcommittee?

Frequently Asked Questions

What is Community Project Funding?

Community Project Funding is generally defined as spending provisions in federal legislation that:

- Are requested on behalf of constituents or constituent organizations by a Member of Congress or Senator.
- Provides, authorizes, or recommends a specific amount of discretionary budget authority, credit authority, or specific funding amount to a specific entity for a specific purpose.
- The purpose of the project must meet the objective of a federal program under existing law.

Community Project Funding is typically requested for projects with a clear purpose and goal above and beyond normal operating activities, for which private, non-federal funding is not available or sufficient. Community Project Funding will typically only serve as a partial contribution to the total cost of a project.

Can I request funding for “bricks and mortar”?

In general, no. One of the most common requests for funding is for building construction or renovation. Most appropriations accounts specifically prohibit this kind of project given the high demand. There are some exceptions to this rule, including the Economic Development Initiative under the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and certain projects under the Military Construction Subcommittee, etc.

Should I submit my request to both my U.S. Representative and U.S. Senators?

Yes. It is strongly recommended that you submit your request to all of your federal representatives. Our office will make efforts to coordinate with the Senate offices as well.

How much should I request?

It depends on the account from which you are requesting funds. You should not request more funds than you need or that can be realistically spent in the Fiscal Year for which you receive the funds. While you should request the amount that can be expended in the upcoming Fiscal Year that you need, please remember that projects are rarely funded fully due to budgetary restraints. Receipt of funds from Community Project Funding in one Fiscal Year is not a guarantee for Community Project Funding in future Fiscal Years.

If my project is funded, will I receive the full amount I request?

There is no guarantee that an approved Community Project Funding request will be funded at the requested level. It is very likely that you will only receive a portion of your request, if funded at

all. This is mostly due to budgetary restraints. Please keep this in mind when requesting support for your project.

Do I need letters of support?

Yes. The more community support for a project, the better. As explained above, letters of support from local, municipal, and state elected officials and stakeholders, as well as editorials and articles in local newspapers on the importance and necessity of the project are important supplements to your proposal.

What else should I know?

The Community Project Funding process is extremely targeted, and this process is also very competitive. While we will look at all requests, it is strongly recommended you explore other grant and funding sources as well. The House and Senate have to convene a “conference committee” to work out the differences in each of those bills. The Committee requires all members to publicly disclose and post their final requests to the Appropriations Committee once the requests are made. Please remember, even if your project is supported in the House and/or Senate Appropriations bills, the funding level is subject to change until the final bill is signed into law.

If my Community Project Funding request is granted, what is the process for getting the assistance and how quickly will I receive it?

In general, recipients of Community Project Funding will be contacted by the appropriate agency or office that oversees the account from which your project received funding. This cannot happen until the appropriations bill in which your project was listed is signed into law. In most cases, entities receiving funding will have to complete and submit a grant application outlining the project’s goals, cost estimates and other requirements. This may be a time consuming process so please factor that into planning.

Can I depend on receiving Community Project Funding for the same project more than once?

Generally, no. Most successful requests are one-time infusions of funding, generally used to launch a project or partially contribute towards the total cost of a project. Given the limitations on the appropriations process for Community Project Funding, there is no guarantee that Congress will support a project for more than one year. However, you should discuss the needs of your project with us if you believe that federal support will be needed beyond a single fiscal year.

Acknowledgements

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